

Acts of the Holy Spirit - 15
The Sent Life
Acts 13, Week of Oct 22, 2017
Bay Park Life Groups – Leader

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.
~ Jesus, Acts 1:8

Acts chronicles the fulfilling of God's vision, the gospel of his grace going global. Acts 2-6 records phase one, the gospel spreading in Jerusalem ("so the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly . . ." 6:7). Acts 7-12 recounts phase two, the gospel in Samaria ("But the word continued to spread and flourish." 12:24). Chapter 13 is the beginning of the last phase where the gospel now goes beyond Palestinian and Syrian borders. So far, the Holy Spirit has led believers to cross seismic cultural borders, but now the Holy Spirit will take believers across geographical borders.

1. How has the Holy Spirit been speaking to you? Pick one of the following:
 - Through Sunday's sermon . . .
 - Through the Acts series . . .
 - This past week . . .

Read Acts 13:1-12

2. What insights can we glean from vv 1-3 regarding the leading of the Holy Spirit?

*"In our anxiety to do justice to the Holy Spirit's initiative, we should not depict the church's role as having been entirely passive. Would it not be true to say both that the Spirit sent them out, by instructing the church to do so, and that the church sent them out, having been directed by the Spirit to do so? This balance will be a healthy corrective to opposite extremes. The first is the tendency to individualism, by which a Christian claims direct personal guidance by the Spirit without reference to the church. The second is the tendency to institutionalism, by which all decision-making is done by the church without reference to the Spirit. Although we have no liberty to deny the validity of personal choice, it is safe and healthy only in relation to the Spirit and the church. There is no evidence that Barnabas and Paul 'volunteered' for missionary service; they were 'sent' by the Spirit through the church. Still today it is the responsibility of every local church (especially its leaders) to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, in order to discover whom he may be gifting and calling."*¹

~ John Stott

¹ John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, InterVarsity Press, 1990, chapter 10

Though Luke leaves us in the dark as to exactly how the Holy Spirit revealed his will, clearly it happened in a context where these believers were openly seeking God's will in worship, fasting and prayer. From Luke's description, it's quite possible that the event described was that of a church gathering.

Side note: The leadership of the church at Antioch was clearly diverse. Barnabas was a Cypriot Jew (4:36). Simeon was obviously "black" and most likely African. Lucian was from North Africa, Manaen was a relative of royalty while Saul was an academic Jew.

Read Acts 13:13-52

3. What verses and ideas stand out to you most and why?
4. Compare Acts 13:14-52 with 17:26-31. How does Paul's audience shape his sermon? What is consistent? What changes? What are the Implications?

Consistent

- The focus is on the person of Jesus, not just his teachings.
- Jesus' death and resurrection
- Eye witness testimony
- There were follow-up conversations – it wasn't just one talk and that's it.
- People's response. Some are drawn to grace others scandalized by it.

Changed

- Starting point.
- Vocabulary
- Level of detail
- Reference points, sources of authority (for Jews Bible, for philosophers a statue to an unknown God).

Implications

- Be a student of people – listen patiently, observe carefully.
- It's usually not a one time conversation but an ongoing relationship that God uses.
- The message remains the same but how it's communicated changes.

5. How has context shaped the way you share Jesus with others? What aspects of the gospel are you most comfortable sharing? Least? Any examples?
6. Reread 13:39 a couple times through, in different translations.
 - What are the most common means of self-justification today?
 - What insights and/or convictions does this verse bring to bear on your spirit?

Read 13:52 and let it guide your prayer time together.